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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

78th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 2 May 2006, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Agenda items 46 and 120 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/825)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a report of the Secretary-General entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy", which has been circulated in document A/60/825.

Statement by the Acting President

The Acting President: It is my pleasure to preside over this plenary meeting of the General Assembly today as we embark upon another step in the efforts of the United Nations to fight terrorism.

Over the years, we have seen many terrorist attacks around the world. The horrendous attacks of 11 September 2001 were a demonstration of the scale of the death and destruction that terrorism can cause. Last year, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan and the United Kingdom were all targets of terrorist attacks, to name but a few. Only last week, there were further attacks in Egypt. On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to express my condolences to the Government and the people of Egypt, and to the families and friends of all those affected.

Those attacks remind us that the United Nations must continue to pursue vigorously its efforts to combat terrorism. While the negotiations on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism are still ongoing, it is now time for us to elaborate a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism.

At the 2005 World Summit, our heads of State and Government mandated us to develop without delay the elements of a counter-terrorism strategy identified by the Secretary-General. They asked us to do so with a view to adopting and implementing a strategy to promote comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses at the national, regional and international levels to counter terrorism. Today we take the first step in that process.

Shortly, I will invite the Secretary-General to present his report entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy" (A/60/825), which will serve as the basis for our discussions on this important subject. Last month, the two Co-Chairmen — Ambassador Yáñez-Barnuevo of Spain and Ambassador Menon of Singapore — circulated to all Member States their letter outlining the intended work programme in that regard. The President of the General Assembly would value the Assembly's

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active and constructive participation in the upcoming informal consultations, and will count on its continued efforts and support in our fight against the scourge of terrorism.

I now warmly welcome Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the General Assembly, and invite him to take the floor to introduce his report.

The Secretary-General: At the outset, let me join the Acting President in offering sympathy and condolences to the countries, peoples and families who have suffered from terrorism and have lost loved ones.

I deeply regret that, last week in the Fifth Committee, Member States were unable to reach consensus on the proposals I had put before the Assembly on management reform. In spite of that, I am convinced that all Member States remain committed to reform in principle, and I urge the Assembly to work together to rebuild the spirit of mutual trust that is essential to the smooth functioning of the Organization.

I am, as always, ready to help the Assembly in its continued search for agreement on ways to pursue the agenda set out in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1). In particular, members will recall that in that document their heads of State and Government asked me to submit proposals to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to assist States in combating terrorism and to enhance the coordination of United Nations activities in that regard. Members will also recall that heads of State and Government also urged the Assembly to develop without delay the elements I had identified, with a view to adopting and implementing a strategy to promote comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses at the national, regional and international levels to counter terrorism.

Today, I have the privilege of presenting to the Assembly my vision on that matter, as contained in the document entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy". Those recommendations stem from a fundamental conviction that we all share, namely, that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, is unacceptable and can never be justified. Uniting around that conviction is the basis for what I hope will be a collective global effort to fight terrorism — an effort bringing together Governments, the United Nations and other international organizations, civil society and the private sector, each using its comparative advantage to supplement the others' efforts.

In formulating my recommendations, I have built further on the "five Ds", the fundamental components that I first outlined in Madrid last year. They are: dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or from supporting it, denying terrorists the means to carry out an attack, deterring States from supporting terrorism, developing State capacity to defeat terrorism, and, finally, defending human rights. I believe all five are interlinked conditions crucial to the success of any strategy against terrorism. To succeed, we will need to make progress on all those fronts.

Implementing a global strategy requires us to dissuade people from resorting to terrorism or from supporting it, by driving a wedge between terrorists and their potential constituencies. We need to launch a global campaign of Governments, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector, with the message that terrorism is unacceptable in any form and that there are far better and more effective ways for those with genuine grievances to seek redress. One of the clearest and most powerful ways by which we can do that is by refocusing our attention on the victims. It is high time we took serious and concerted steps to build international solidarity with them, while respecting their dignity as well as expressing our compassion.

Denying terrorists the means to carry out attacks means denying them access both to conventional weapons and to weapons of mass destruction. That will require innovative thinking from all of us about today's threats, including those that States cannot address by themselves, such as bioterrorism. Similarly, it will mean working together to counter terrorists' growing use of the Internet. We must find ways to make sure that this powerful tool becomes a weapon in our hands and not in theirs.

Our work in deterring States from supporting terrorism must be rooted firmly in the international rule of law — creating a solid legal basis for common actions and holding States accountable for their performance in meeting their obligations. That work is intimately linked with the need to develop State capacity to defeat terrorism.

In response to a request I received last December from the President of the General Assembly, the

document I am presenting today elaborates on steps to build State capacity and to strengthen the Organization's work in that field. The United Nations system has a vital contribution to make in all the relevant areas, from promoting the rule of law and effective criminal justice systems to ensuring that countries have the means to counter the financing of terrorism; and from strengthening capacity to prevent nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological materials from falling into the hands of terrorists, to improving the ability of countries to provide assistance and support for victims and their families.

Finally, defending human rights runs like a scarlet thread through the report. It is a prerequisite to every aspect of any effective counter-terrorism strategy. It is the bond that brings the different components together. That means the human rights of all — of the victims of terrorism, of those suspected of terrorism, and of those affected by the consequences of terrorism.

States must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Any strategy that compromises human rights will play right into the hands of the terrorists.

All States, in every region — large or small, strong or weak — are vulnerable to terrorism and its consequences. They all stand to benefit from a strategy to counter it. They all have a role to play in shaping such a strategy, in implementing it and in ensuring that it is updated continuously to respond to challenges as they evolve.

It is also essential that Member States conclude, as soon as possible, a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. However, lack of progress in building consensus on a convention cannot be a reason for delay in agreeing on a strategy. By instructing their representatives to adopt and implement a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, heads of State and Government have given them a momentous challenge and a historic opportunity. By rising to that challenge, they will demonstrate the resolve of the international community and lay the foundations of a truly global response to that vicious global scourge. I hope my recommendations will help them in that vital mission.

The Acting President: May I remind member States that the first informal consultations on the comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy will be held on Thursday, 11 May at 10 a.m. and at 3 p.m. Members are requested to consult the *Journal* for the venues of those meetings.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 46 and 120.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/60/L.53)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on agenda item 10 at its 63rd plenary meeting on 15 December 2005.

I call on the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.53.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): I have the distinct honour to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" on behalf of the sponsors listed in document A/60/L.53. I would also like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following 22 counties have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Cape Verde, Denmark, Djibouti, Gabon, Georgia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Nepal, Nicaragua, San Marino, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Yemen and Zambia.

The international conferences of new or restored democracies have been an important force in building up the global momentum towards democratization. Those conferences have served as a source of inspiration for many fledgling democracies in their struggle to establish modern and functioning democratic societies built upon the principles of pluralism, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and democratic governance; they have also facilitated the exchange of views, experiences and lessons learned amongst themselves and with more mature democracies.

The intergovernmental process of the international conferences has a rich experience of fruitful cooperation with the United Nations system. It should, as such, play a role in translating into reality the commitments made by world leaders at the 2005 world summit to support democracy by strengthening countries' capacity to implement the principles and practices of democracy and to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to assist Member States.

The text before us reaffirms, therefore, the commitment of the international community to democracy and the important role of the United Nations in providing timely, appropriate and coherent support to the efforts of Governments to achieve democratization and good governance within the context of their development efforts. It encourages the Secretary-General to continue improving the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to the requests of Member States including, inter alia, through the activities of the Democracy Fund at the United Nations.

The draft resolution places strong emphasis on the follow-up to the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, inviting all stakeholders to inform the Secretary-General of the actions taken to that end. That provision reflects the significance that Mongolia, as host and Chair of the Fifth International Conference, attaches to ensuring effective and efficient follow-up to the recommendations adopted there.

As members are aware, among the major activities being implemented by Mongolia in that respect is the development of democratic governance indicators for the country to measure its democratic performance. That, along with a country information note, will lay the basis for a national plan of action aimed at helping consolidate democracy in Mongolia. This programme will, we believe, facilitate the design and piloting of methodologies which other new or restored democracies can use for the preparation of their national action plans, country information notes and democracy indicator databases, as agreed under the Ulaanbaatar Plan of Action.

Mongolia will also host an International Follow-up Conference on New or Restored Democracies in Ulaanbaatar on 1 and 2 June this year with a view to sharing its follow-up experiences with other countries. That event will gather International Conference stakeholders together with international democracy experts to take stock of follow-up activities and engage in discussions on how to institutionalize the innovations into the International Conference movement.

The comprehensive tripartite conference structure, which includes Governments, parliaments and civil society, was pioneered at the Fifth International Conference at Ulaanbaatar. It constituted a major step forward in the progressive development of the International Conference process by allowing for the greater interaction and cooperation of various stakeholders in the common effort of promoting democracy. That aspect is duly reflected in the text in the context of both follow-up of the Fifth International Conference and arrangements for the forthcoming Sixth International Conference.

The Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 30 October to 1 November this year. The importance of support by Member States, the United Nations system, the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations for the holding of that Conference is therefore expressed in the draft resolution. The Conference in Doha will be an event of immense significance, since it will take place against the backdrop of the World Summit Outcome and will mark the first time that a conference of new or restored democracies is held in the Middle East. Mongolia wishes every success to Qatar as the next Chair, and pledges its active cooperation in the lead-up to the Doha Conference.

The draft resolution that we are to adopt today was the subject of very careful examination by Member States in four rounds of informal consultations. I would like to take this opportunity to express the sincere gratitude of my delegation to the delegations that took an active part in the drafting process and were with us throughout the consultation and negotiation process for their valuable input and constructive ideas, which helped us to shape the present draft. That active participation and interest, as well as the large number of sponsors of the draft resolution, demonstrate the continued validity and relevance of the International Conference process and bode well for the success of the forthcoming Doha Conference. I hope that many more countries will join in co-sponsoring the draft resolution today, thus further

reinforcing its message on democracy promotion to the international community.

On behalf of all of the sponsors, may I express our hope that the draft resolution will, as in the past, command the unanimous support of the Assembly and be adopted without a vote.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.53.

The representative of Costa Rica has asked to speak in explanation of position before a decision is taken on the draft resolution. Before giving the floor to that representative, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ballestero (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to speak in explanation of position, in conformity with rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/60/L.53.

Since the 1988 Manila Declaration, Costa Rica has closely followed developments in what is known as the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. In 1994, we participated as observers at the Second International Conference, held at Managua, which our Minister for Foreign Affairs attended. That was a clear signal of my country's support for that important initiative. We also participated as observers in the Bucharest and Cotonou meetings, and, although we were unable to attend the Conference at Ulaanbaatar, we paid close attention to its outcome. Our delegation's interest in and support for the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies is thus clear and long-standing.

Costa Rica would like to draw attention to paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which merely "encourages" the Secretary-General to continue to improve the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to the requests of Member States in the area under consideration. My delegation unreservedly supports that request and understands by it that, far from simply "encouraging" the Secretary-General, paragraph 4 sets out a requirement identical to those set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the resolution, as we explained during informal consultations.

As the Secretary-General himself rightly pointed out in his report contained in document A/60/733, entitled "Mandating and delivering: analysis and recommendations to facilitate the review of mandates", in practice there has been a degree of ambiguity in resolutions when it comes to setting up mandates, by the indiscriminate use of words such as "requests", "calls upon" and "encourages". The Secretary-General tells us that such ambiguity may make it easier for Member States to reach decisions, as is the case today. However, as the Secretary-General states in paragraph 10 of the report,

> "since the membership has indicated a wish to use its review of mandates to examine opportunities for programmatic shifts, it is both necessary and desirable to identify a working definition of the unit of analysis and delineate the scope of the exercise."

My delegation welcomes the recommendation of the Secretary-General and agrees with him that it "necessary and desirable", especially at this stage in the United Nations reform process, to learn from experience and overcome formulas that have made it difficult to take action and to assess such action within Organization. Using precise terms of reference when setting up mandates should be a priority for the General Assembly.

Having made that clarification, Costa Rica would like to reiterate its support for the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies initiative. That is why my delegation is among those that have called for the adoption of draft resolution A/60/L.53 without a vote.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the representative of Mongolia for his leadership and commitment. His delegation has been by our side since the beginning of the negotiation process. We reiterate our support for and solidarity with that delegation.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.53.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, the following countries have added their names to the list of sponsors: Burkina Faso, Niger, Paraguay, El Salvador, Cameroon and Maldives.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.53?

Draft resolution A/60/L.53 was adopted (resolution 60/253).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to explain its position on the draft resolution that we have just adopted.

First, we would like to thank the delegation of Mongolia for its professionalism and for the outstanding manner in which the process was conducted. It enabled us to reach a positive outcome acceptable to all. The resolution contains various elements relevant to international perspectives on democracy, including the reaffirmation that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.

It also reaffirms that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy, and that it does not belong to any country or region; and reaffirms the necessity of due respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination.

However, we would like to express our concern about two elements contained in the resolution; my delegation would like to make its position on those aspects clear.

First, with regard to operative paragraph 1, my delegation wishes to state that it firmly rejects some of the recommendations and proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/556). It is my delegation's view that this paragraph does not in any way endorse the proposals in question. We are concerned that these recommendations made by the Secretary-General indicate an intention to give official recognition to international groups or movements that promote the exclusion of developing countries from the United Nations.

It is clear that such movements, unlike the movement of new or restored democracies, apply selective, discriminatory and exclusionary criteria that are based on double standards, rather than on genuine international cooperation in the area of human rights and democracy.

With regard to the report's perspectives on the establishment of democratic governance indicators, we wish to make it perfectly clear that we will oppose any attempt to impose in future subjective indicators that are politicized and discriminatory and that are drawn up without the participation of the specialized governmental agencies charged by the United Nations with dealing with such tasks.

Secondly, with regard to operative paragraph 4 and the reference to the so-called Democracy Fund at the United Nations, my delegation continues to be concerned, as we stated at the time of the adoption of the 2005 Summit Outcome document, that it is not clear who will decide — and how — which countries are able to access that Fund to establish or consolidate their democracies.

We will make sure that the Democracy Fund is not used as a kind of mechanism for certifying who is or is not democratic. We are also concerned that, with the Fund, we will witness a continuing erosion of specific United Nations Development Programme development plans and programmes through activities that overlap with those that must be carried out by the Department of Political Affairs.

Finally, we would like to thank Mongolia once again for its very positive work.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I wish to inform the General Assembly that the Assembly will take up the reports of the Fifth Committee at a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.